

I. Introduction: In this passage Paul confronts the Corinthians' superficial evaluation of him and explains the righteous characteristics of a true servant of Jesus Christ.

- A. Paul wanted the church at Corinth to humble themselves and rightly understand how God wants His people to serve. He desires trustworthy, reliable, and faithful people.

II. Jesus' Assessment of Leaders (1 Cor 4:1-13).

A. The Admirable Servants (**vv. 1-5**).

1. Paul told the Corinthians that the most important duty of a minister of Jesus is that one is to be faithful, and to remember that the judgment of men is a small matter.

B. The Arrogant Saints (**vv. 6-8**).

1. Paul told the Corinthians not to be proud and judge God's servants based on their standards, but on God's standards, which are revealed in His word.

C. The Afflicted Slaves (**vv. 9-13**).

1. Paul contrasted the foolish pride of the Corinthians with the reality of his own life. He was humble, poor, and persecuted while they were proud, rich, and esteemed.

III. Conclusion: Paul said that the true servant of Christ is one that is faithful to God's calling, humble in his thinking, and suffering affliction for preaching Jesus Christ.

Questions About: Jesus' Assessment of Leaders

1. How do you evaluate a pastor? Is it based on the size of his congregation? Number of baptisms? Budget size? Books written? Education? Followers? Speaking engagements?
2. What did Paul say was God's way that He evaluates His servants? **(1 Cor 4:1-5)** What does the word "servant" mean? **(v. 1)** How did this dispel their notion of superiority?
3. What did Paul think about their evaluation of him? **(1 Cor 4:1-5)** Why did Paul not even evaluate himself? **(v. 3)** Why should a servant not even trust his own judgement? **(Jer 17:9)**
4. Whose opinion did Paul care about? **(v. 4)** Who's opinion do you value? How does Jesus' opinion differ from other people's opinions? **(v. 5)** What will Jesus reveal in the end?
5. How did Paul confront their arrogant behavior? **(1 Cor 4:6-8)** What did he tell them not to exceed? **(v. 6)** How does going beyond the Bible always lead to arrogance? **(v. 6)**
6. What three questions did Paul ask them? **(1 Cor 4:6-8)** How did each question destroy their attitudes of superiority? How did Paul use biting sarcasm to mock their arrogance?
7. How did Paul contrast Himself with them? **(1 Cor 4:9-13)** What words did he use to describe himself? How had Paul been a spectacle? A fool? Weak? The scum of the world?
8. How is persecution proof of faithful Gospel ministry? **(John 15:18-25; 2 Tim 3:12)** What was Paul's response to it? **(1 Cor 4:12-13)** How should we respond? **(Matt 5:44, 46)**

Prayer

1. Pray that God would help you to be a faithful and trustworthy servant of Jesus Christ.
2. Pray that God would help you to respond to persecution like Jesus did.